



OPIOID ANALGESICS USE IN SERBIA

Sara Vasović¹, Dušan Prodanović², Lucija Vasović¹, Aleksandra Hinić³, Nebojša Stilinović²,

Velibor Vasović², Ana Tomas Petrović²



¹Faculty of Medicine, University of Novi Sad, Novi Sad, Serbia

²Department of Pharmacology, Toxicology and Clinical Pharmacology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Novi Sad, Novi Sad, Serbia

³Pharmacy “Benu apoteka”, Serbia

Introduction: Opioid analgesics play a crucial role in managing pain, Data on trends in opioid use in Serbia is limited.

Aim: This study aimed to analyze trends in opioid analgesic use in Serbia.

Methodology: The analysis was based on data from the Medicines and Medical Devices Agency of Serbia for the period 2014–2019. Utilization was expressed as defined daily doses per 1000 inhabitants per day (DDD/1000 inhabitants/day) and the number of drug packages, following the ATC/DDD methodology version 2020.

Results: The total consumption of opioid analgesics showed a slight decrease, from 6.79 DDD/1000 inhabitants/day in 2014 to 6.06 DDD/1000 inhabitants/day in 2019. This decline was primarily driven by reduced use of weak opioids, particularly the combination of codeine, paracetamol, caffeine, and propiphenazone, which accounted for over 85% of total consumption in most years. In contrast, strong opioids, such as morphine and fentanyl, exhibited an increasing trend. Fentanyl usage increased by 17.64% (from 0.096 to 0.113 DDD/1000 inhabitants/day), while morphine consumption increased by 31.57% (from 0.057 to 0.075 DDD/1000 inhabitants/day). Transdermal fentanyl became the dominant formulation for strong opioids, reaching 0.133 DDD/1000 inhabitants/day in 2019.

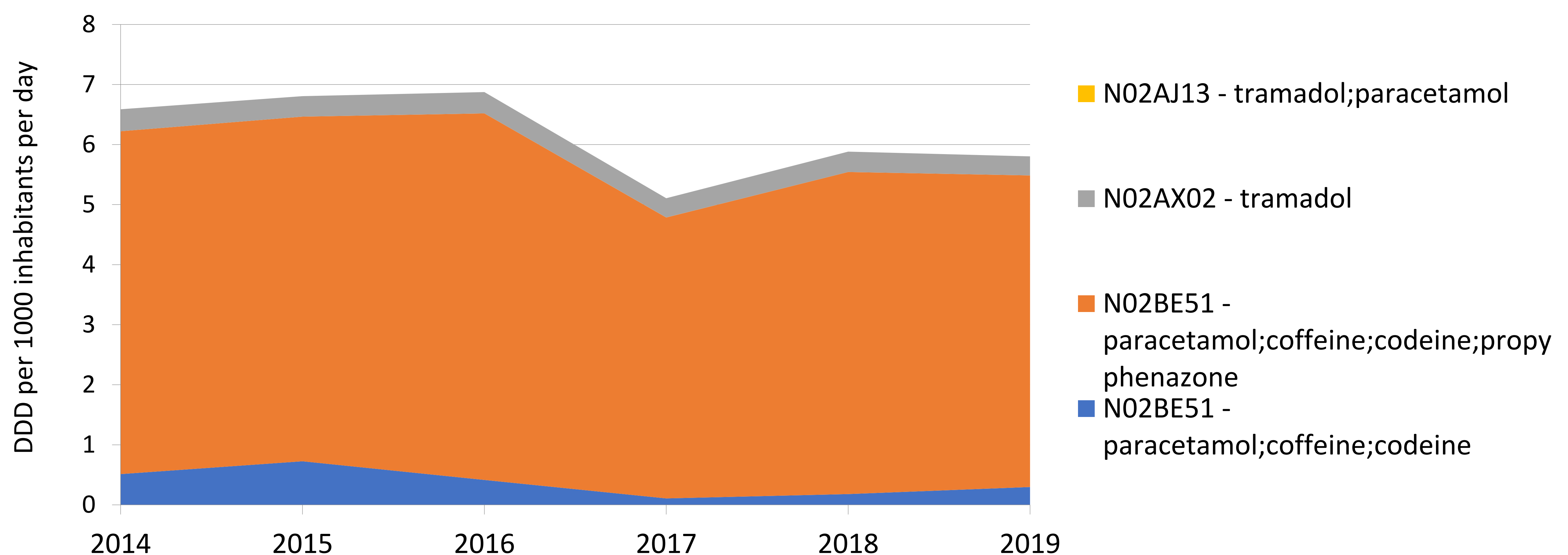


Figure 1. Use of weak opioid analgesics and their combinations from 2014 to 2019

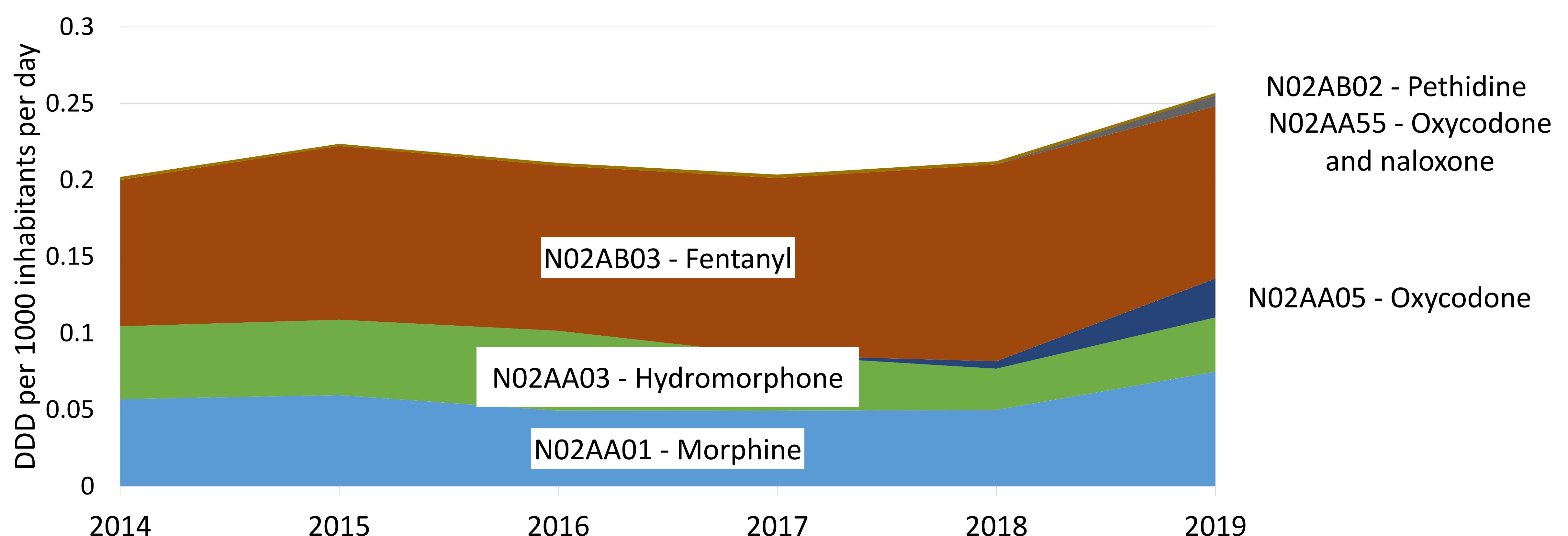


Figure 2. Use of strong and moderate opioid analgesics from 2014 to 2019

Conclusion: Although weak opioids still dominate total consumption, the growing use of strong opioids indicates progress in pain management practices.